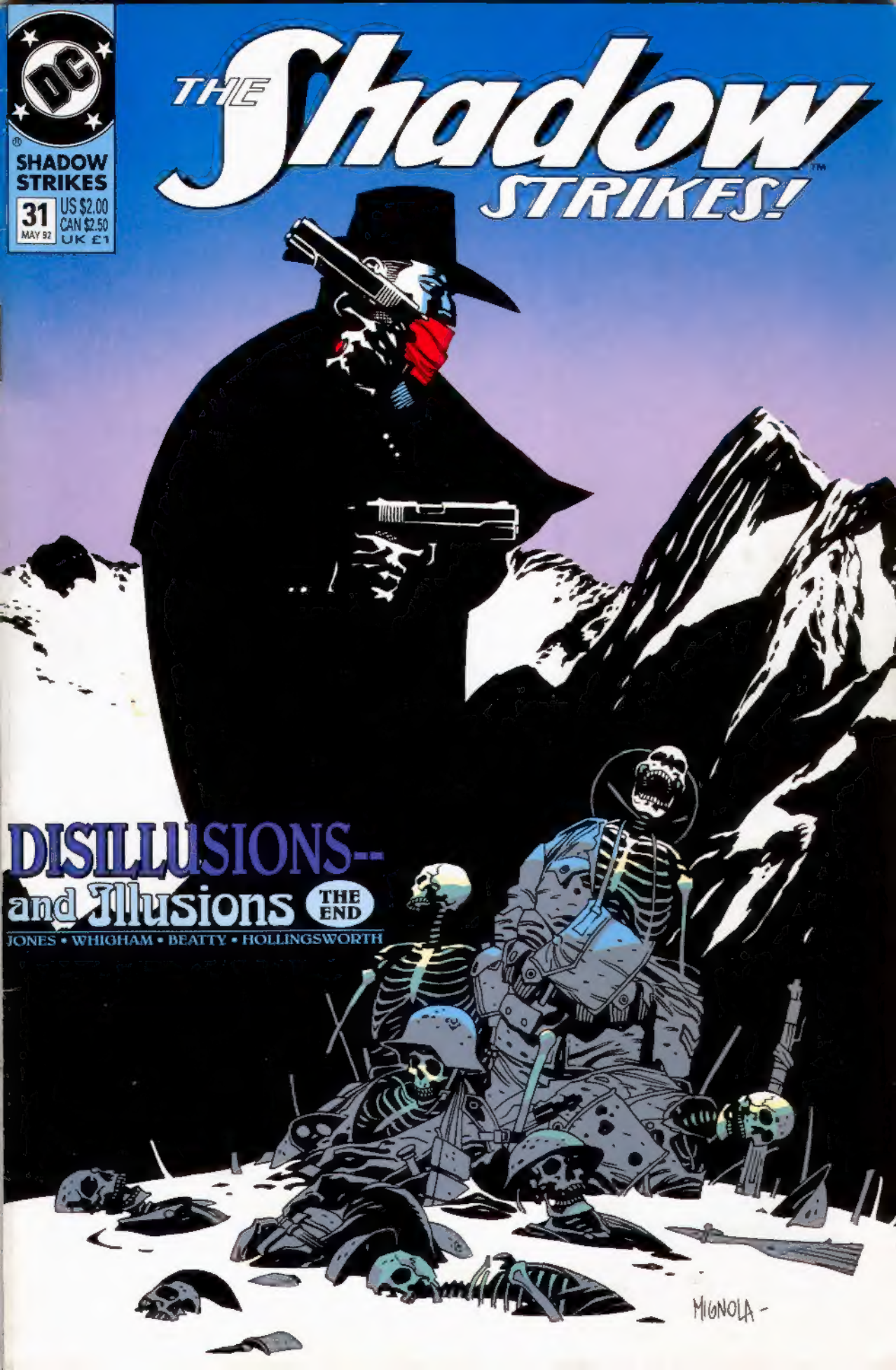
THE Shadow STRIKES!
SHADOW STRIKES
31
MAY 92
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DISILLUSIONS--
and Illusions
THE END
JONES • WHIGHAM • BEATTY • HOLLINGSWORTH
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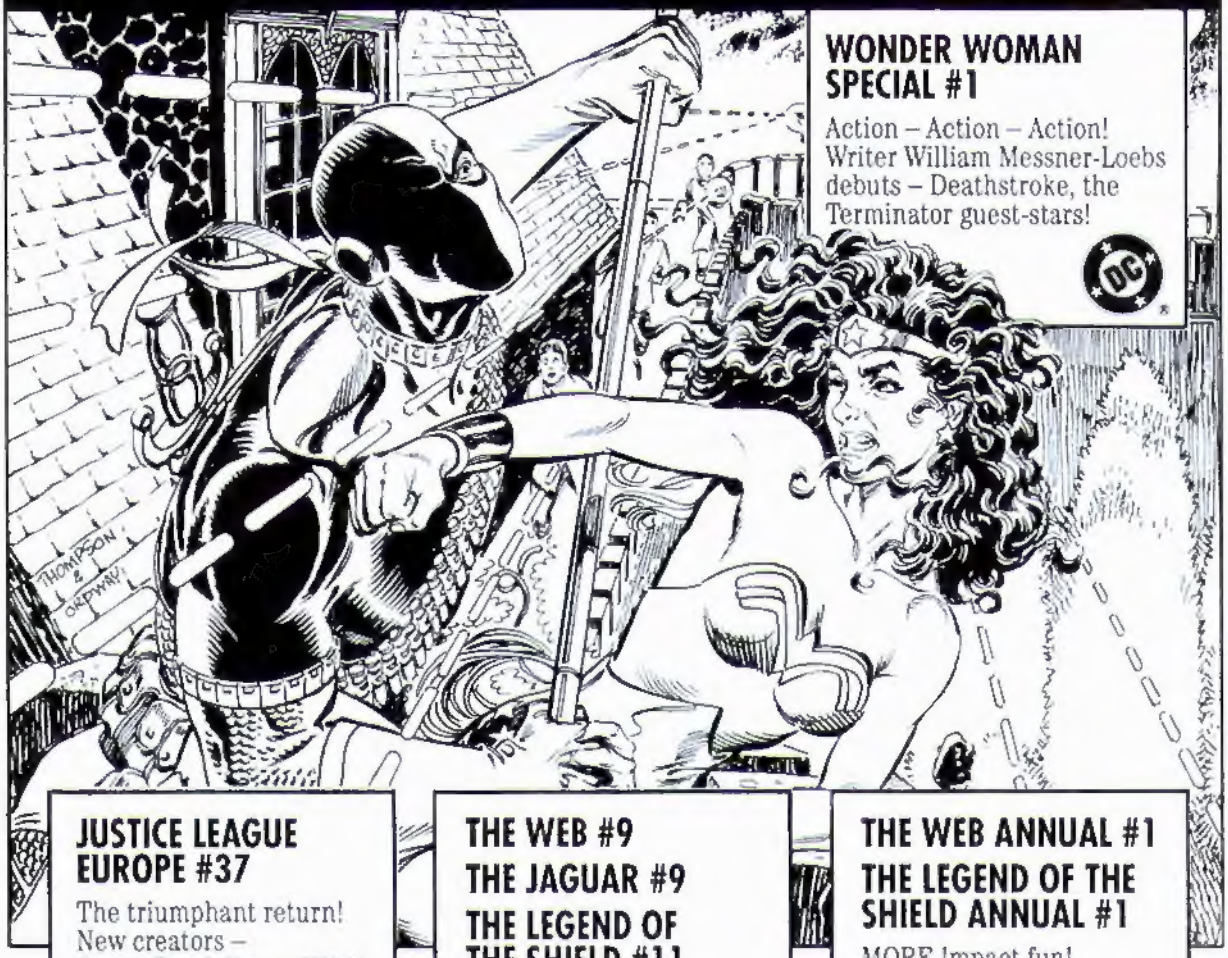
MORE THAN SUPER-HEROES (BUT WE'VE GOT THEM TOO!)



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Action – Action – Action!
Writer William Messner-Loebs debuts – Deathstroke, the Terminator guest-stars!

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The triumphant return!
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New villian –
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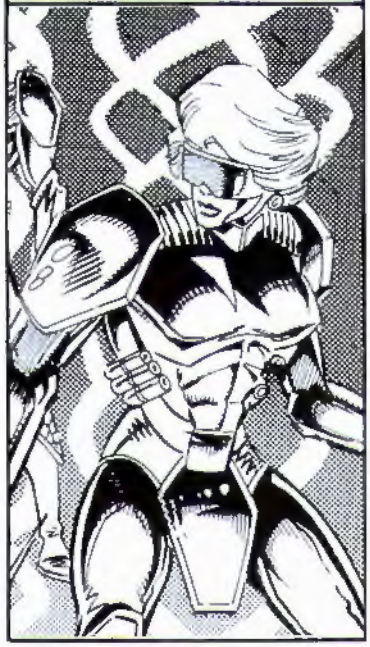

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YOU WILL TELL ME!
THE RING!
THE RING HE SHOULD HAVE HAD! THE RING RASPUTIN SHOULD HAVE HAD!
HAD HE SPENT LESS TIME PLOTTING TO INCREASE HIS OWN POWER AND MORE IN THE SERVICE OF THE CZAR, THE CZARINA MIGHT HAVE GIVEN IT TO HIM... AND NOT TO ME.
BUT I SERVED THE CZAR. IT IS MY REMINDER OF PAST EVILS. IT IS THE SMEAR OF BLOOD ON MY HANDS.

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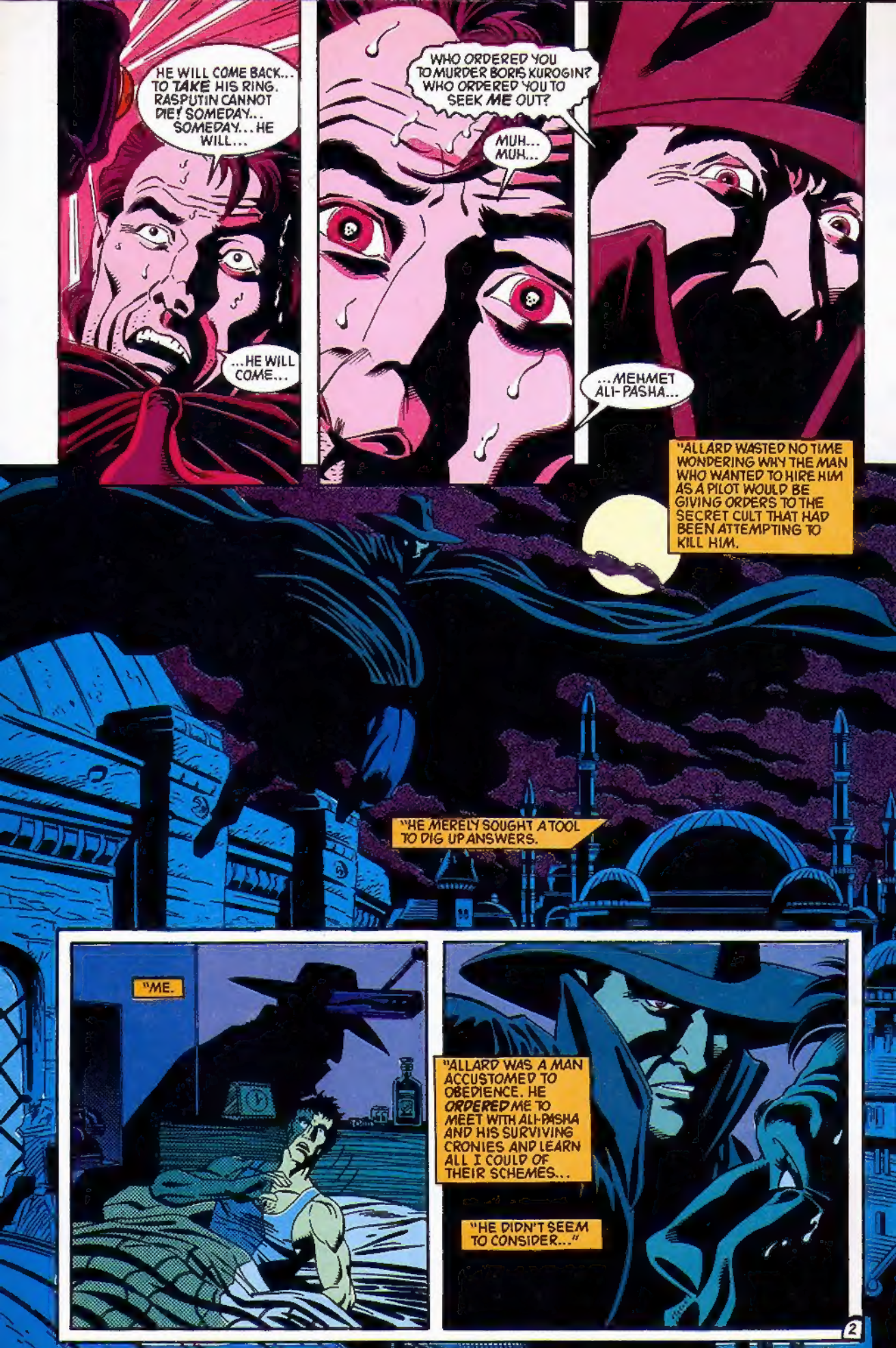
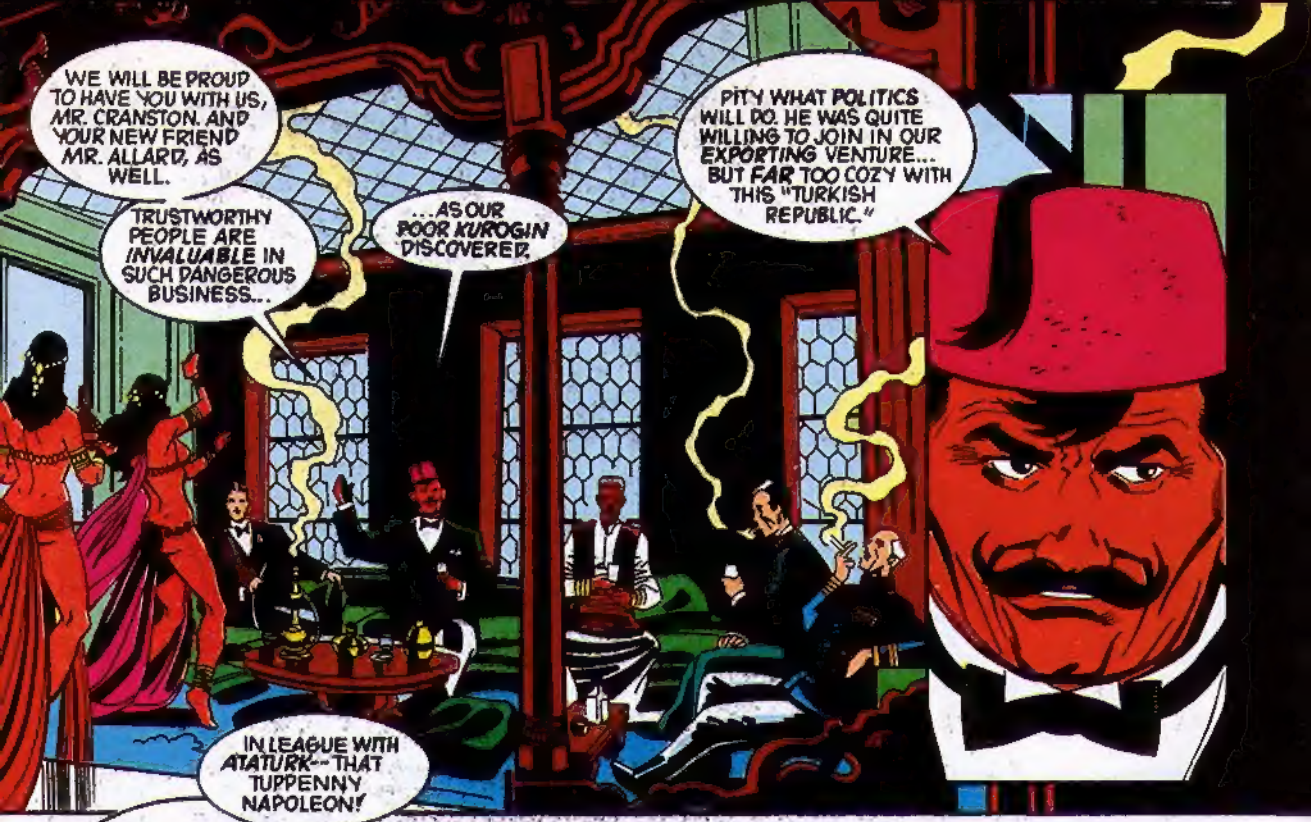

HE WILL COME BACK... TO TAKE HIS RING. RASPUTIN CANNOT DIE! SOMEDAY... SOMEDAY... HE WILL...
...HE WILL COME...
WHO ORDERED YOU TO MURDER BORIS KUROGIN? WHO ORDERED YOU TO SEEK ME OUT?
MUH... MUH...
...MEHMET ALI-PASHA...
"ALLARD WASTED NO TIME WONDERING WHY THE MAN WHO WANTED TO HIRE HIM AS A PILOT WOULD BE GIVING ORDERS TO THE SECRET CULT THAT HAD BEEN ATTEMPTING TO KILL HIM.
"HE MERELY SOUGHT A TOOL TO DIG UP ANSWERS.
"ME.
"ALLARD WAS A MAN ACCUSTOMED TO OBEDIENCE. HE ORDERED ME TO MEET WITH ALI-PASHA AND HIS SURVIVING CRONIES AND LEARN ALL I COULD OF THEIR SCHEMES...
"HE DIDN'T SEEM TO CONSIDER..."

"...THAT I MIGHT BE ENTERTAINING OTHER DESIGNS."
HA! THAT'S MY CRANSTON, OKAY!
THIS ALLARD WANTS YOU TO STOP THE RICH BAD GUYS FROM KILLING HIM...AND WHO KNOWS WHO ELSE...
...AND CRANSTON'S LOOKIN' TO PLAY BOTH SIDES, SAVE HIMSELF AND SKIM SOME MONEY OFF THEIR EXPORTING SCHEME BESIDES! NO WONDER HE'S THE DARLING OF NEW YORK SOCIETY!
OKAY. LET'S GO. "I WAS TO CONVINCE THEM THAT ALLARD COULD BE TRUSTED, AND SHOULD BE HIRED FOR THEIR TRANSATLANTIC SMUGGLING...
"...SO THAT HE COULD INFILTRATE THEIR RANKS FIRSTHAND. I AGREED...
"...NOT REALIZING THEN THAT HE SOUGHT INFORMATION ABOUT ME THROUGH--OTHER SOURCES."
OH, LOOK!
WHAT ARE THESE?
AMULETS TO WARD OFF THE EVIL EYE. THE MIDDLE EAST IS A LAND OF OLD AND UNPREDICTABLE EVILS. ANY LITTLE THING MIGHT HELP.
I WOULD SAY YOU COULD USE ONE, KENT... EXCEPT I THINK YOU ARE THE EVIL EYE!
ANOTHER CRACK ABOUT MY EYES, DAISY?
THOSE EYES DON'T SHOW THINGS...BUT THEY'VE SEEN THINGS. YOU'VE GOT A SMILE ON YOUR LIPS, BUT FIRE IN THOSE EYES.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, KENT? WHAT MADE YOU?
3

WHAT DO YOU WANT, DAISY? TALES OF DEATH AND VIOLENCE? YOU LOVE THOSE THINGS BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T KNOWN THEM.
YOU RIDE IN YOUR ROADSTERS, SWILL YOUR GIN, QUOTE YOUR MENCKEN AND FITZGERALD. BUT YOU KNOW NOTHING OF LIFE. AND LESS OF DEATH.
LLAALLII-LLAHAA
WHAT--?
OH. IT'S JUST... WHAT DO YOU CALL HIM... CALLING THEM TO PRAYER.
IT STARTLED ME THIS MORNING, TOO. SUCH A STRANGE SOUND. NOT BEAUTIFUL, BUT... IT WON'T LET ME GO.
IT'S THE SOUND OF PAIN AND ANGER. THE SOUND OF SEEKING GOD AND ALWAYS FALLING SHORT, AND HATING GOD BECAUSE OF IT...
...BUT FEARING TO HATE HIM. AND YEARNING FOR LOVE TO END THE FEAR.
IT'S THE BLEEDING OF THE SOUL.
LLAAHHHHH
IT WAS THE WAR, WASN'T IT? SOMETHING HORRIBLE HAPPENED TO YOU IN THE WAR.
YES. SOMETHING HORRIBLE HAPPENED TO ME IN THE WAR.
I SURVIVED.
4


WE WILL BE PROUD TO HAVE YOU WITH US, MR. CRANSTON. AND YOUR NEW FRIEND MR. ALLARD, AS WELL.
TRUSTWORTHY PEOPLE ARE *INVALUABLE* IN SUCH DANGEROUS BUSINESS...
...AS OUR *POOR KUROGIN* DISCOVERED.
PITY WHAT POLITICS WILL DO. HE WAS QUITE WILLING TO JOIN IN OUR *EXPORTING* VENTURE... BUT *FAR* TOO COZY WITH THIS "TURKISH REPUBLIC."
IN LEAGUE WITH *ATATURK*--THAT TUPPENNY NAPOLEON!

LEADING HIS *ARMY* AGAINST US... AFTER THE SULTAN HAD SIGNED A *TREATY*! A TREATY WITH FRANCE, AMERICA... AND *BRITAIN*!
WE'D HAVE MADE SOMETHING *USEFUL* OF THIS BLOODY COUNTRY! BUT *ATATURK*...

...HE THREATENS THE *FAITH*. HE THREATENS THE PROPER AUTHORITY OF THE PROPHET'S SPOKESMEN.
HE BRINGS *SECULARISM* TO TURKEY. HE WILL *MAKE US JUST ANOTHER WESTERN HELL*.

YOU LADS CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT WITH THIS COUNTRY.
I *LIKE* MY SECULAR HELL. AND I'LL DO WHATEVER I CAN TO *MAKE* IT MORE... *BOUNTIFUL*.

THEN YOU DO THE RIGHT THING, JOINING US. OUR PLAN CANNOT *HELP* PAYING GREATLY...
...NOW THAT A FEW REGIONAL *POTENTATES* GIVE US AN EXCLUSIVE *MARKET* ON THEIR *POPPIES*.

"POPPIES"?
AH, YES. OUR AMERICAN CONTACTS TELL US THAT YOUR *"PROHIBITION"* WILL SOON BE ABOLISHED. MEANING THAT YOUR CRIMINAL FAMILIES WILL SEEK SOMETHING *NEW* TO SELL.
AND WE *HAVE* THAT SOMETHING...

HEROIN.
BY THE TON!
THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WILL LOOK THE OTHER WAY IF WE CAN GUARANTEE THAT THE MONEY WILL BE USED TO INSTITUTE ANGLO-FRENCH CONTROL OF TURKEY...
...THUS STIFLING RED RUSSIA'S INTERESTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.
WITH YOUR FUNDS AND AMERICAN CONNECTIONS, THE POTENTIAL FOR PROFIT IS COLOSSAL.
COLOSSAL INDEED. I HAD NO IDEA.
AND METHINKS, BEFORE WE CONTINUE INTO SUCH RISKY WATERS...
...I SHOULD CHECK ON MR. ALLARD A BIT MORE CLOSELY.

JUST TO BE SAFE.
"I SURVIVED"? THAT'S ALL HE SAID?
THAT'S ALL.
WHAT IS THIS ABOUT, LAMONT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THOSE MEN?

MAKING MONEY TO BUY YOU NICE THINGS. YOU NEEDN'T KNOW ANY MORE.
NO. THERE'S SOMETHING EVIL HERE. KENT SENSES IT. HE WANTS YOU TO HELP HIM END IT.
BUT I SMELL IT ON YOU, TOO.
OH. "KENT" WANTS TO END IT, DOES HE?
ALLARD IS JUST A DRIFTER, TRYING TO SAVE HIS OWN MEAGER CARCASS. IT WAS FUN TO PLAY WITH HIM...
...BUT I HAVE MY OWN CARCASS TO LOOK AFTER NOW. AND HE WOULDN'T DO ANY MORE FOR ME.
MAYBE...
...BUT KENT HAS KNOWN THE KIND OF HORROR THAT WE'RE ONLY FLIRTING WITH. AND IN HIS HEART I THINK HE WANTS TO DO MORE THAN SAVE HIS OWN LIFE.
"IN HIS HEART," HM?

AH, DAISY. AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE A SPECIAL ONE. A FUN ONE. BUT YOU'RE AS MUCH A SLAVE TO SENTIMENT AS ANY WOMAN.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
PACKING YOU UP. I'LL GET YOU A BERTH ON THE NIGHT TRAIN TO SOFIYA, AND MEET YOU THERE WHEN THIS IS DONE.
BY THEN I HOPE YOU'LL HAVE FORGOTTEN YOUR SCHOOLGIRL CRUSH AND FOUND YOUR MATURITY AGAIN.
YOU CAN'T DO THIS--!
I PAID FOR YOUR TRIP HERE, DAISY DEAR. I'VE PAID FOR EVERYTHING SINCE I FOUND YOU MOONING OVER THAT PAINTER IN WASHINGTON SQUARE.
MONEY IS EVERYTHING, KITTEN. AND MY MONEY SAYS... YOU GO.

"I SUPPOSE I SHOULD HAVE STAYED WITH HER, TO MAKE SURE SHE LEFT.
ISTANBUL
"BUT I NEVER THOUGHT A GIRL LIKE DAISY WOULD TOSS AWAY HER MEAL TICKET.
"I NEVER THOUGHT SHE'D DARE TO FIND HER WAY ALONE THROUGH THAT CITY.
"SHE WAITED WHERE WE'D FIRST MET HIM, WHERE SHE KNEW HE WASTED HIS EVENINGS IN HUMOROUS RETELLINGS OF THE SIGHTS THAT SICKENED HIM.
"THE HOTEL BAR ALLOWED NO UNESCORTED LADIES, OF COURSE. BUT SHE FOUND A WAY TO WAIT...
HOTEL PERA PALAS
"...UNTIL ALLARD CAME."
DAISY! WHAT IN THE--?
8

WHY ARE YOU DOING IT, KENT? ONLY FOR YOURSELF? OR TO STOP THEM?
HOTEL
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING ABOUT, DAISY?
NO. YOU AND LAMONT ARE TOO GOOD AT CLOAKING EVERYTHING IN DARKNESS. BUT I KNOW HE'S PRETENDING TO HELP YOU...
...WHILE HE'S REALLY PLOTTING WITH THEM!
WHAT?
DAMN HIM... IF IT'S TRUE HOW DO I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU?
BECAUSE YOU KNOW. WE HAVE THE SAME SHADOW IN OUR SOULS, YOU AND I. MEANINGLESSNESS.
BUT YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOURS. YOU'VE DONE EVIL... I DON'T KNOW WHAT, BUT YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE... AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO SURRENDER TO IT OR MAKE UP FOR IT.
YOU CAN MAKE UP FOR IT. AND I WANT TO HELP YOU.
WE CAN'T TALK ABOUT THIS HERE. I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING...
...AND I CAN'T TAKE YOU WITH ME.
THIS IS MY ADDRESS. I'LL GIVE YOU SOME MONEY. SHOW THIS TO A CAB DRIVER. AND WAIT FOR ME THERE.
I'LL COME FOR YOU.
1325

THIS IS THE MAN TO CONTACT IN NEW YORK.
REMEMBER NOW, I'M NOT FULLY COMMITTED. I'VE AGREED TO MAKE SOME INQUIRIES FOR YOU, TEST THE WATERS...
WHATEVER YOU DO, THE WORLD WILL BE GRATEFUL, CRANSTON... SOMEDAY.
RICCARDO GIORDI
WE MUST KNOCK THESE DIVISIVE LITTLE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS DOWN, WHEREVER THEY SPRING UP. WE MUST MAINTAIN THE NEW WORLD ORDER THAT THE WAR HAS GIVEN US.
AND, OF COURSE, MR. CRANSTON, WE ARE PERSONALLY GRATEFUL... FOR YOUR TELLING US THE TRUTH ABOUT THIS ALLARD!
AH, MR. CRANSTON! PLEASE, ALLOW ME TO...
...MR. CRANSTON?
10

WHAT IS THEIR PLAN?
"I TOLD HIM EVERYTHING." HELL, OF COURSE YOU DID, CRANSTON! "ONE FORM OF SELF-PRESERVATION REPLACES ANOTHER."
"EVERYTHING IS SELF-PRESERVATION, I TOLD HIM." JUST LIKE EVERY COWARD! HA! WHAT THE GOVERNMENTS ARE DOING..."
...AND WHAT YOU ARE DOING. YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR WHAT I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU.
ALI-PASHA MENTIONED THAT HE'D DISCOVERED YOUR PRESENT HIDE-OUT... AND MIGHT SEND ASSASSINS.
ASSASSINS?!
BUT YOU NEEDN'T FEAR NOW. JUST STAY AWAY, AND ALL THEY'LL FIND IS AN EMPTY HOUSE...
...WON'T THEY?

"ISTANBUL IS NOT A CITY THROUGH WHICH EVEN KENT ALLARD CAN MOVE EASILY.
"IT WAS STILL LESS EASY FOR HIM WITH ME AS A BURDEN. I CAN'T SAY WHY HE BROUGHT ME...
"... UNLESS IT WAS THAT HE KNEW WITH A CERTAINTY WHAT HAD HAPPENED. .
...AND HE WANTED ME TO SEE."

"WHAT DID I FEEL? IT'S DIFFICULT TO SAY. REMORSE, YES. AND SORROW EVEN I WAS CAPABLE OF SOME FONDNESS
"BUT MORE, I FELT FEAR OF WHAT THE MAN BESIDE ME MIGHT DO.
"FOR A LONG, FRIGHTENING MOMENT HE GAVE NO MOVEMENT AND NO SOUND.
"HE ASKED HIMSELF IF A SINGLE DEATH DROPPED ONTO THE TOP OF A VAST PILE OF DEATHS COULD BE ONE TOO MANY
"AFTER A HUNDRED THOUSAND DEATHS, HE ASKED, COULD THIS ONE BE TOO MANY?
"THEN HE BEGAN TO SPEAK. OF DEATH. AND THE WAR.

"IN AN EXPLOSION OF WORDS HE TOLD IT ALL. HE WAS A PATRIOT AND THE LOVE OF GOD AND COUNTRY SENT HIM INTO THE FIERCEST TRAINING OF MIND AND BODY THAT ANY WESTERNER COULD IMAGINE.

"FOR LOVE OF COUNTRY HE MANIPULATED THE RUSSIAN CROWN, AND PLAYED PANTOMIMES ON THE WORLD STAGE TO PROLONG THE WAR UNTIL AMERICA WAS READY TO ENTER.

"HE CAME TO DETEST THE RUSSIAN CROWN, AND TO CRY FOR THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE. AND HE EXCHANGED HIS GUILT FOR THE FAITH THAT THIS WOULD ALL BRING PEACE AND FREEDOM.

'AND JUSTICE.

BUT WHEN THE WAR ENDED, AND THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE ROSE AGAINST THE CROWN, HIS GOVERNMENT ORDERED HIM TO SUPPRESS THEM

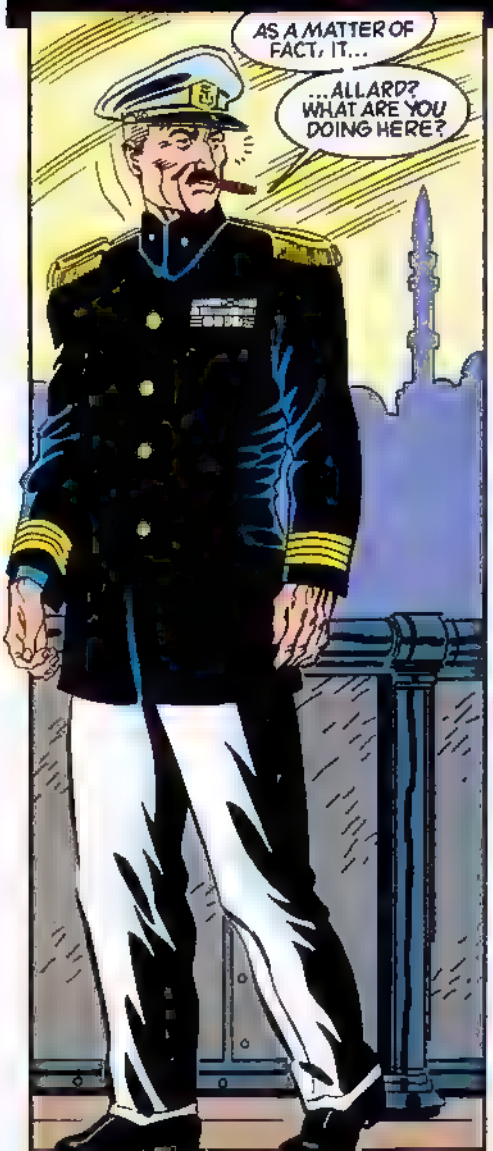
"AND HE, WHO ONCE BELIEVED IN GOD AND COUNTRY, ORCHESTRATED THE ALLIES IN A SECRET WINTER WAR AGAINST THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE.

"THE SECRET WAR FAILED BUT THOUSANDS DIED, AND THEIR BLOOD RUNS IN HIS DREAMS.

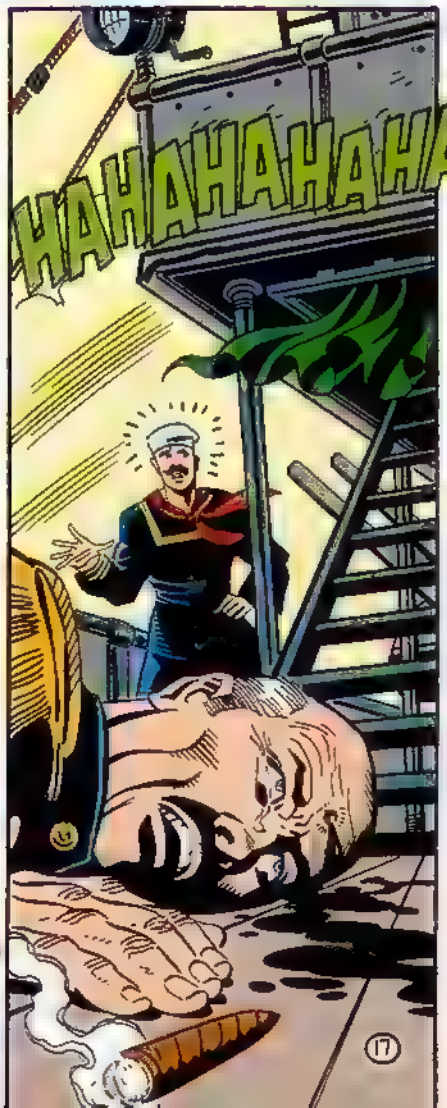
"WHEN THE EXPLOSION PASSED. WITH A LAST WORD--'JUSTICE'--HE LEFT ME ALONE.
"WITH A LAST WORD--'JUSTICE.' AND WITH MY LITTLE DAISY."
--NAAAiiii--
DUMARS.
ALLARD...? WHY... WHY ARE YOU WAKING ME?
I WANTED YOU TO SEE THIS.

BAM
HAHAHAHAHA
BAM
BAM

MORNING CONSTITUTIONAL, COMMANDER?


AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT...
...ALLARD? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I FOUND SOMETHING... THAT I WANTED TO SHARE.
BAM BAM BAM


HAHAHAHAHA

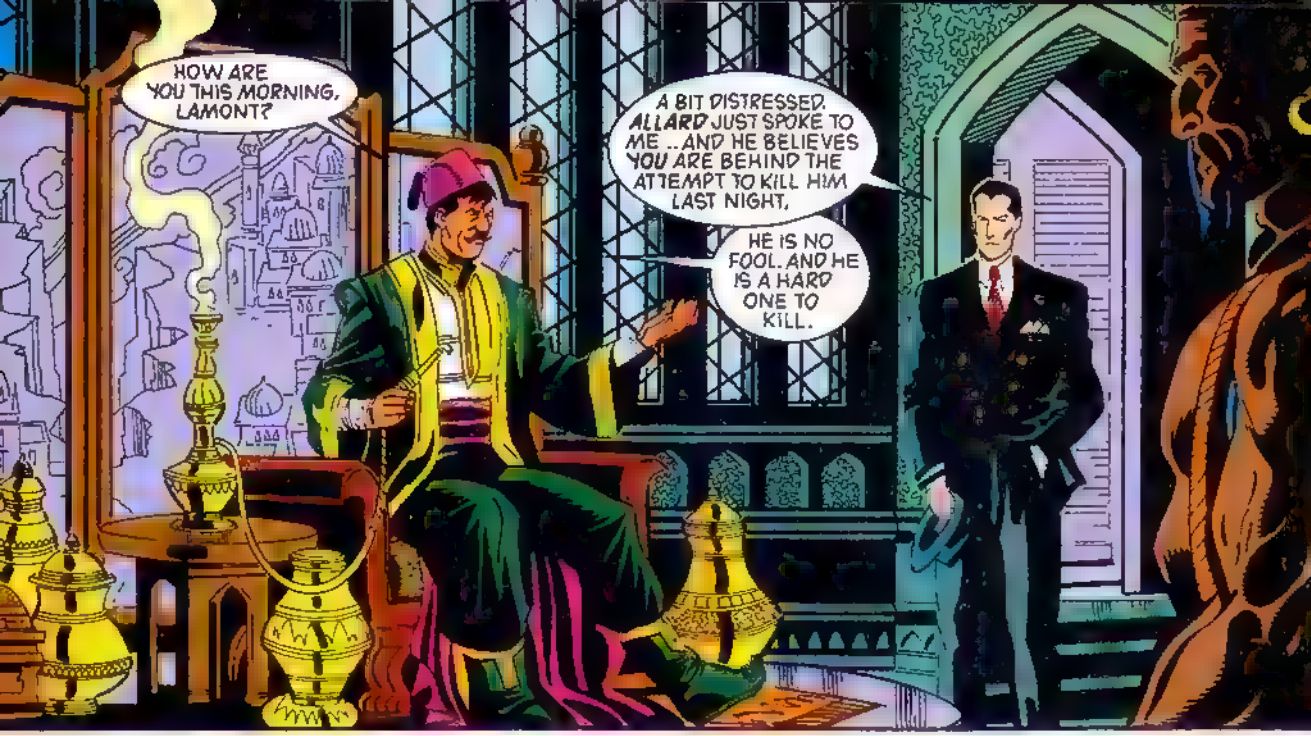
ILLLAHAA

18

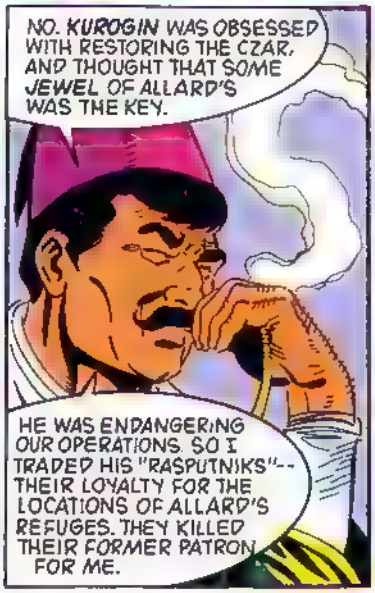
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM

<FORGIVE ME FOR DISTURBING YOUR SERVICES. BUT DO NOT BOTHER ASKING GOD TO FORGIVE ME.>
<I AM AFRAID I AM LONG-SINCE DAMNED.>
HAHAHAHAHA
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, CRANSTON?
OUT OF THIS HORRIBLE CITY! THIS HORRIBLE WORLD! BACK TO WHERE I BELONG! TO NEW YORK!
AND BACK TO WHAT? THE RUINATION OF YOUR NEAT LITTLE WORLD?
WHAT.. WHAT..?
I HAVE TOLD YOU, CRANSTON. YOU STAND UPON A PINNACLE OF SAND.
A PINNACLE OF BORROWING. OF CREDIT BASED ON FAITH. OF FALSE MONEY.
YOUR FINANCIAL LEADERS ARE MAD WITH GREED. YOUR PRESIDENT WILL NOT SEE THE TRUTH. THE FEDERAL RESERVE IS A RUNAWAY TRAIN WITH FOOLS FOR ENGINEERS.
YOU CANNOT SAVE YOUR WORLD, CRANSTON.

AND WHO CAN?! YOU, I SUPPOSE?!
YES. I CAN. IF I WISH TO.
OH, GOD WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME? WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
YOU WILL HAVE YOUR LIFE OF LUXURY, CRANSTON, YOUR EASE AND ADVENTURE. YOUR EMPIRE.
BUT YOU WILL SERVE MY ENDS.
PLEASE, MR. CRANSTON. THE PASHA EXPECTS YOU.
20


HOW ARE YOU THIS MORNING, LAMONT?
A BIT DISTRESSED. ALLARD JUST SPOKE TO ME ..AND HE BELIEVES YOU ARE BEHIND THE ATTEMPT TO KILL HIM LAST NIGHT.
HE IS NO FOOL. AND HE IS A HARD ONE TO KILL.

HE THINKS YOU'VE BEEN AT IT FOR QUITE SOME TIME. USING THIS PREPOSTEROUS RUSSIAN CULT THAT WORSHIPS RASPUTIN. IS THAT SO?


NO. KUROGIN WAS OBSESSED WITH RESTORING THE CZAR, AND THOUGHT THAT SOME JEWEL OF ALLARD'S WAS THE KEY.
HE WAS ENDANGERING OUR OPERATIONS. SO I TRADED HIS "RASPUTNIKS"-- THEIR LOYALTY FOR THE LOCATIONS OF ALLARD'S REFUGES. THEY KILLED THEIR FORMER PATRON FOR ME.

YOU KNOW QUITE A BIT ABOUT ALLARD.
I WILL BE THE NEXT SULTAN OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE. I WILL RESTORE THE OTTOMANS. SUCH PROMISE GIVES ME MANY RESOURCES
I HAVE MANY VOICES WHISPERING IN MY EARS

I KNOW, FOR INSTANCE, THAT THE AVIATOR, KENT ALLARD, DIED IN THE WAR. I KNOW A MAN OF ENORMOUS POWERS WANDERS ASIA UNDER ALLARD'S NAME...AND FACE.
21

I DO NOT KNOW WHO HE IS. BUT I KNOW THAT I WANT HIM TO SERVE ME. OR TO DIE.

WHY ARE YOU SO CURIOUS ABOUT ALLARD, CRANSTON?
I ONLY WANTED A FEW ANSWERS...

BAM
...BEFORE YOU DIED.
<YOU FELLOWS MAY ATTACK ME .. IF YOU WEARY OF LIFE.>
<IF YOU WISH TO LIVE, LET ME GO AND REMEMBER...>
"K ..THAT THE WEED OF INJUSTICE BEARS BITTER FRUIT>"
JEEZ
"SO IT WAS THAT I, LAMONT CRANSTON, BECAME A SERVANT OF THE SHADOW. SO IT WAS THAT KENT ALLARD--OR WHOEVER WAS USING HIS NAME--FOUND HIS PURPOSE.
"NOT COUNTRY. NOT GOD. NOT LAW. BUT JUSTICE ALONE JUSTICE AS HE DEFINES IT.
"AND IF I FOUND THE ADVENTURE I WANTED. AND A LIFE THAT, THOUGH A SHAM, IS FAR LESS USELESS THAN BEFORE."
the I wanted. And
hat, though a sham,
less useless than before
Lamont Cranston

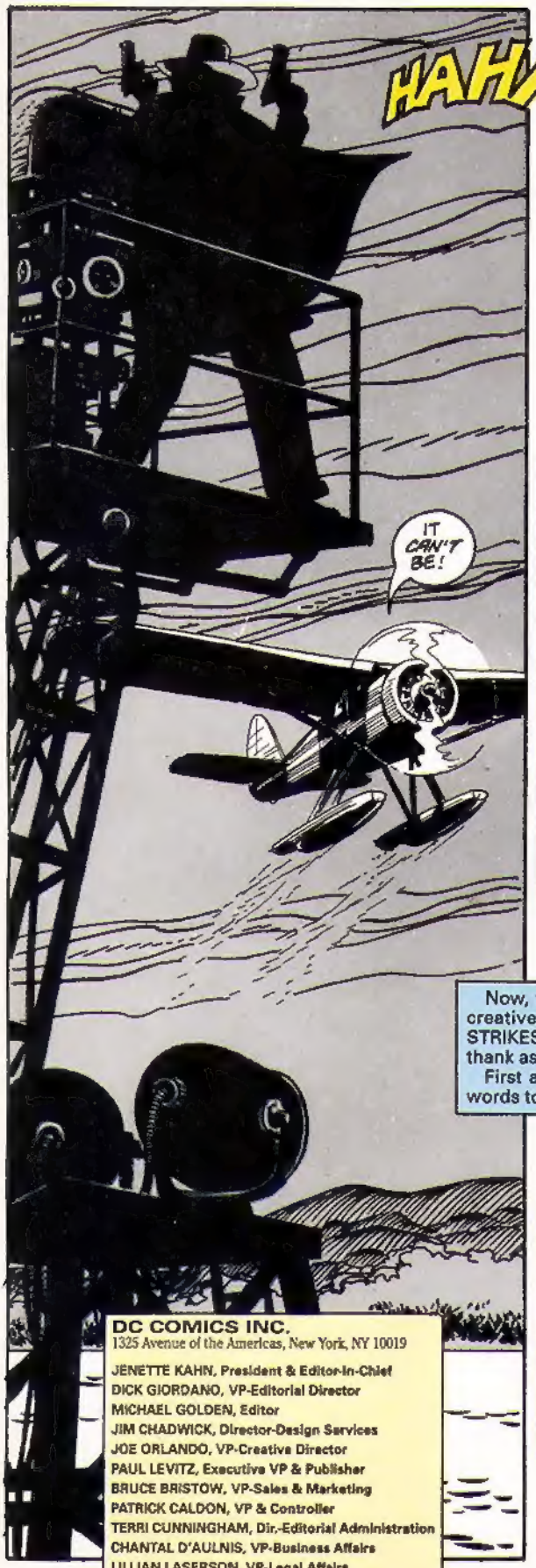
LAMONT CRANSTON
AND ALL THIS TIME, ALL THIS DIGGING, I FIGURED TO FIND CRIMINAL CONNECTIONS. LAMONT CRANSTON--AND THE SHADOW.
I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND HIM. WHAT HE DOES. HOW HE DOES IT. WHY HE DOES IT.
BUT I CAN'T STOP HIM. WHATEVER MY HEAD SAYS ...IN MY HEART I CAN'T STOP HIM.
HE'S FINISHED, FRITZY.
READ MOST OF IT ALOUD, BLESS HIS LITTLE SEMI-LITERATE POLICEMAN'S SOUL.
I THINK YOU ACHIEVED WHAT YOU WANTED BY DELIVERING THOSE CRANSTON MEMOIRS.
INSPECTOR CARDONA SHOULD BE LESS OF A NUISANCE IN THE FUTURE.
PRECINCT 13
FORGIVE ME FOR ASKING, CHIEF... BUT IS THAT THE TRUE STORY OF HOW YOU STARTED ALL THIS?
POLICE
WHO IS TO SAY WHAT IS TRUE?
ANOTHER DAY, PERHAPS, I SHALL TELL THE TALE OF SHAMBALLAH. AND ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER TALE.
ALL THAT MATTERS...
23

...AND ILLUSION

"...IS THAT THE Shadow KNOWS!"

WRITTEN BY GERARD JONES
PENCILLED BY ROD WHIGHAM
INKED BY JOHN BEATTY
LETTERED BY BOB PINAHA
COLORED BY MATT HOLLINGSWORTH
EDITED BY MICHAEL GOLDEN

BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY WALTER GIBSON



WELL, THIS IS IT, THE FINAL ISSUE OF THE Shadow STRIKES!

We've intimated over the past few issues that we would be back with a new incarnation of The Shadow in the near future. We're sorry to say that will not be the case. Let's explain a few realities to you. These have nothing to do with sales or demographics or the like. The Shadow is a licensed property. In certain cases, DC Comics pays another company, Condé Nast in this case, for the use of their character for a period of time. You will recall that other publishers have had the use of The Shadow in the past. As a licensed product, DC Comics needs to renew that license periodically, at the discretion of the licensor. It seems that this time there were other folks interested in trying their hand with The Shadow and they now have the license. We wish those other folks lots of luck with The Shadow and his minions, and we bid The Master, Margot, Harry and the rest a fond farewell. It's been a fun ride, and we hope that our little contribution to the mythos of the Dark Avenger entertained you all as well. Your letters and comments, which have increased incredibly of late, have shown you to be quite involved in the lives of our cast of characters, and we are sure you will remain with them wherever they go. Perhaps, some day, they'll be visiting with us at DC again.

Now, we have another cast of characters to discuss. The creative team involved during the run of THE SHADOW STRIKES! is a bit larger than we thought, but we want to thank as many of them as we can.

First and foremost, writer Gerard Jones, who has a few words to share with us...

And just when I was about to write that "Voodoo Master" story I'd been putting off for months...the rights to The Shadow move to another publisher. Ah, well. Two and a half years ain't bad. We set out to tell some fun suspense and mystery tales, to flesh out The Shadow's world and agents as no other Shadow-team had done before, and to play with collisions of historical reality and pulp reality. We did okay, we had a good time, and we're grateful that you stuck with us. Someday maybe we'll get another shot at it. And we'll do the Voodoo Master. And the rise of the Nazis. And the secret life of Harry Vincent. And...

Gerard Jones, 1/14/92

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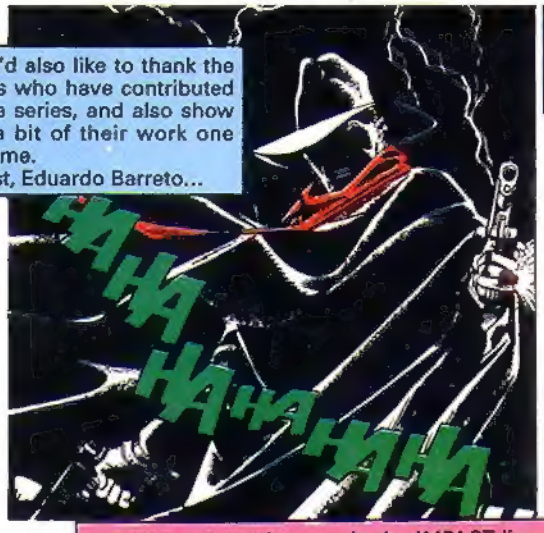
We'd also like to thank the artists who have contributed to the series, and also show you a bit of their work one last time.
First, Eduardo Barreto...



Eduardo's work can be seen in MASTER OF THE FUTURE, an Elseworlds tale of Batman, penned by none other than Brian Augustyn.
Next up, Rod Whigham...

Rod's work can be seen in the IMPACT line of books and will continue to be seen for quite a while to come.
Gerry Fernandez...

John Beatty...

And to the rest of the regulars...Anthony Tollin and Matt Hollingsworth, colorists extraordinaire, John Workman and Bob Pinaha, letterers unlimited, go our thanks.

We'd also like to mention various folks who've made guest appearances from time to time.
Mark Badger...

Dan Spiegle...

And these folks also contributed along the way...Steve Leialoha, Don Kraar, David Cody Weiss, Mike DeCarlo, Stan Drake, Frank Springer, Willie Schubert, Elliot S. Maggin, Carrie Spiegle, L. Lois Buhalis, Albert DeGuzman, Jay Dubleu, Rick Magyar, Joe Quesada, Michael Bair, James Blackburn, Randy DuBurke, Mike Mignola, Michael Netzer, Luke McDonnell, Michael Wm Kaluta, Jeff Butler, and we hope we haven't forgotten anyone.

Last of all, we'd like to thank the editor who drove most of the way, Brian Augustyn. Hope you're having fun as head honcho at Justice League HQ. You folks should check out the action over there. It's a brand-new beginning.

Thanks also to Michael Golden, who parked the car after a 31-issue drive. We've heard a great deal from Michael as an artist. Wait till you see what he has in store for you as an editor.

And me—well, I seem to be setting a record of sorts for writing the final letter columns in the final issues of series. (WHO'S WHO IN THE DC UNIVERSE, WHO'S WHO IN IMPACT, RAGMAN, THE SHADOW STRIKES!...) Anyway, I recently became DC's Collected Books Editor and I have a couple of other things up my sleeve. It's been fun being on the receiving end of your letters. Hope we can talk again soon. For now you can find me in the letter columns of THE FLY and ANIMAL MAN. Can't talk now. Gotta run.

—Bob Kahan

Our Readers Speak

A few months back in *Inside DC* #5's "Try It—You'll Like It," we printed the results from a poll of DC staffers who were asked to name the DC series they felt was most underrated. I concluded that column by asking our readers to vote for their favorite underrated series. A number of you responded, so let's take a look at a sampling of the letters received on this topic...

Dear Michael:

I find your column, *Inside DC*, to be very enjoyable and informative, and after recently seeing the "Try It—You'll Like It" feature, I thought I'd drop you a short line about what I consider to be DC's most underrated book. Before I do, though, I'd better say that I think the most underrated series of all time from any publisher was DC's excellent 'MAZING MAN. It only lasted twelve issues, three specials, and one cameo in SECRET ORIGINS, but 'MAZING MAN was hilarious, charming, poignant—and perhaps the most human comic book I've ever read. Why it was not a smash hit I'll never know, though when the majority of readers seem to prefer books like *X-Men* these days, perhaps the answer is, sadly, blindingly obvious.

Of all the books currently being published by DC, the most underrated one has to be SUICIDE SQUAD. Over the last five years, SQUAD has been one of the most consistenly exciting, intriguing, and *unpredictable* books on the market. There are action, humor, and tightly plotted story lines in each issue, with excellent characterization. It seems to me that this book has never had the following it deserves, and I'd hate to see it go the way of 'MAZING MAN, so perhaps a mention in your column would do it some good.

Thanks for listening, and keep writing *Inside DC*—it's fascinating to see behind the scenes all the little details we'd never find out about if not for your column. Rock 'n' roll.

Rol Hirst
Huddersfield, W. Yorks
England

And thanks for your comments, Rol... it's nice to know our efforts are appreciated. (And, incidentally, I can't take all the credit for Inside DC. *While it's my voice you're reading each week, a number of people toil quietly behind the scenes to produce this column: editor Archie Goodwin and assistant editor Bill Kaplan, proofreader/copy editor Arlene Lo, and Curtis King, DC's cover editor who doubles as the designer of* Inside DC. *And, of course, the decision to run this column in the first place was made by publisher Paul Levitz and editorial director Dick Giordano. Thanks, folks, for all your hard work.)*

I agree with everything you said about the marvelous and sorely lamented 'MAZING MAN. It's sad that most of today's comics readers just won't embrace humor titles. But don't fret—DC loves 'Maze just as much as you do, and when the time is right, you'll see another 'MAZING MAN special.

And, unfortunately, your support for SUICIDE SQUAD has come a wee bit too late, as the title has recently been cancelled. But for more Squad info, keep reading...

Dear Mr. Eury:

Your column about DC's underrated series got me to thinking about my own choices. It's difficult to say, because when you're a regular reader of a series, you never think of it as underrated. I mean, I've been a fan of L.E.G.I.O.N. '92 since it was '89, and until I saw it mentioned in your column, I never thought of it as underrated.

Still, there are a few DC titles that I wish more people would read, and foremost among these is STARMAN. In a time when the trend is to make our heroes "darker" and "grittier" in the name of realism, it is comforting to have a hero who remains good and noble. Starman's stories remind me of the Silver Age—which I am too young to know of firsthand—and are just plain fun.

The other title I feel compelled to mention is SUICIDE SQUAD. John Ostrander is doubtless one of the best writers in DC's employ. Just one of his stories has the characterization, the action, the adventure, and the surprise found in any other five comics. He and co-writer Kim Yale have a knack for fleshing out previously two-dimensional characters, and in SUICIDE SQUAD they do so without the revisionist "let's forget everything previously believed about this character and wipe the slate clean" attitude that pervades most comics today.

Ali T. Kokmen
Brown University
Providence, RI

Uh... STARMAN was recently cancelled, too (gee, this is turning into the bad news edition of Inside DC). *But we're not forgetting Starman—for starters, he's one of the major players in this summer's Annual crossover, ECLIPSO: THE DARKNESS WITHIN (more on the crossover soon), and after that, it shouldn't be too long before you see Starman again... somewhere.*

Another vote for SUICIDE SQUAD?! Maybe I should have run this poll earlier... perhaps your support for these titles would've helped keep them alive. Ali, you and Rol will be happy to learn that although their monthly title is no more, the SUICIDE SQUAD is far from dead. SS editor Dan Raspler tells me that he's planning occasional specials starring Amanda Waller and company. I'll let you know more once plans are cemented.

Our next letter nominates a title you may not expect...

Dear Michael:

Regarding DC's most underrated title, is it fair to nominate a cancelled series? That's what I thought, but I'm doing it anyway, so nyahhh! It is the best DC series in the last twenty years. I am, of course, talking about the late, lamented JONAH HEX! It had humor, action, well-plotted stories, great characters, realism (Good Lord! They don't shoot the guns out of their hands!), and no super-powers, so naturally it was not well liked by the super-hero groupies.

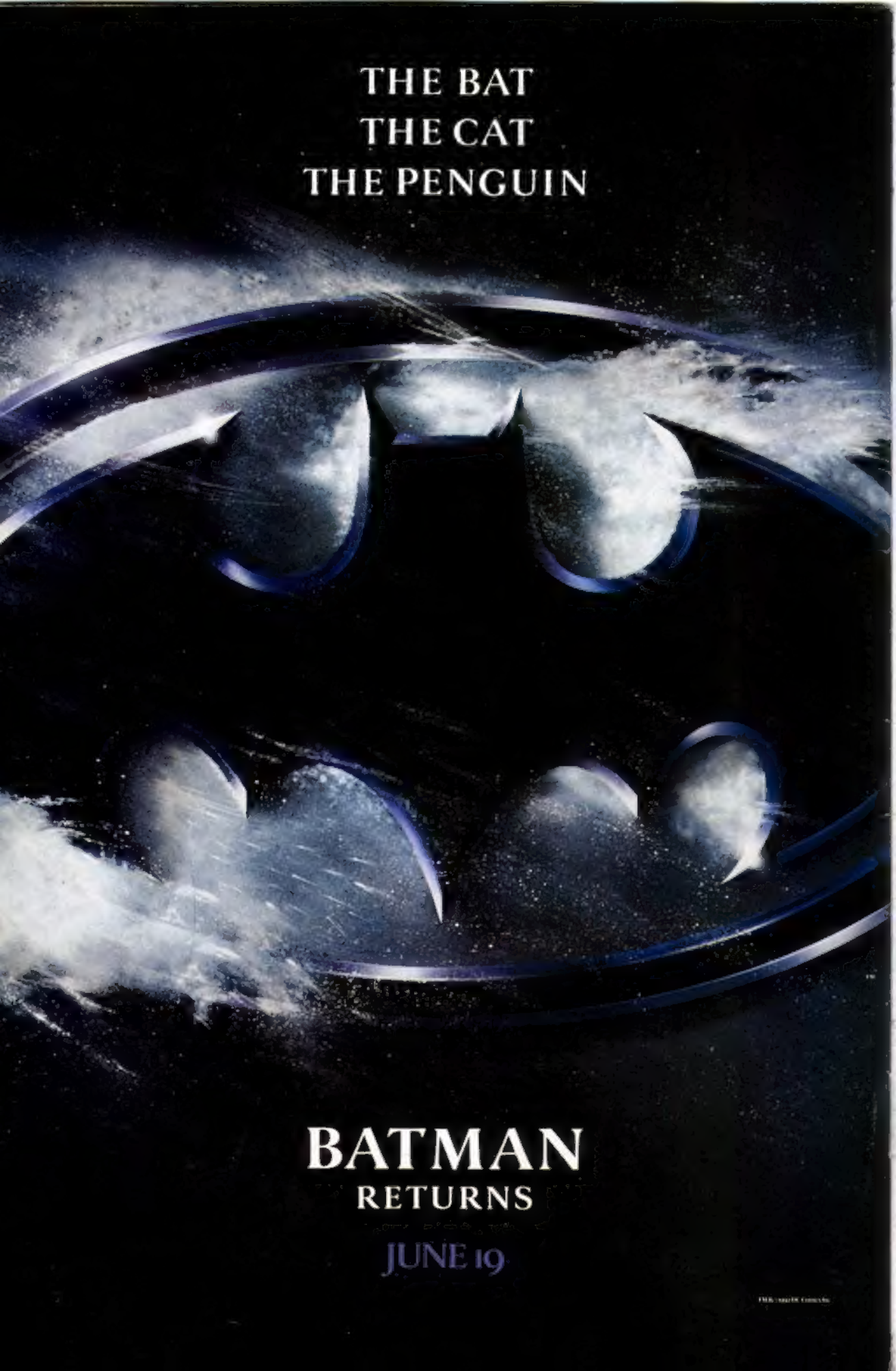
Greg Robertson
Des Moines, IA

Yeah, I kinda miss ol' Jonah, too. It's been a while since we've published a western comic. Do any of you want to see us try it again, with or without Jonah Hex? Write and let us know.

And let's feature this topic again sometime. Maybe next time our timing will be better and your letters of support can actually save a weaker title. As always, I encourage you to write me about this and any other topic you want to discuss. The address: ***Inside DC*, c/o DC Comics Inc., 1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019.**

See you next week.

—Michael Eury


THE BAT
THE CAT
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RETURNS
JUNE 19